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Book Reviews.

The Ethnic Trinities and Their Relation to the Christian Trinity.

A Chapter in the Comparative History of Religions. By
LEVI LEONARD PAINE. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.,
1901. Pp. viii + 378. \$1.75, *net*.

PROFESSOR PAINE'S previous work, entitled *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism*, was noticed in the BIBLICAL WORLD in April, 1901. The book before us is in some sense a sequel to it, and builds upon it. In another sense it is an entirely independent investigation. The former study was concerned entirely with the materials drawn from Christian history and literature. The present work is largely outside of this sphere. It divides into two parts: first, an exposition of the "ethnic trinities;" second, a discussion of their relation to Christianity. Any estimate of the book, therefore, must involve a judgment as to the author's success in dealing with these two lines of investigation.

As for the first, we are not impressed with the accuracy of the exposition of ethnic "trinitarian" ideas. The concept of a "trinity" is most loosely used to mean almost any collocation of three deities, and such collocations, rising out of widely different bases, are compared, combined, and organized into a kind of general doctrine of ethical "trinitarianism." It may be too strong a statement, but we are convinced that such loose generalizations are as severe blows as can be inflicted upon the claim of the new science of comparative religion to scientific validity. Instead of vindicating for it the high place which he has accorded to it—"destined to revolutionize theology and philosophy in many points," etc. (p. 5)—his method, professing to be that of comparative religion, painfully uncritical and invalid at crucial points, will, we fear, prejudice unbiased students against the science in general. Nor will some of the details of his exposition bear scrutiny. The following may be cited as two examples: "The family is the original foundation of human society" (p. 22)—a view not by any means universally accepted—and hence the whole theory of the generation idea in trinitarianism as natural to man falls to the ground; Zoroaster's "reform was directed mainly against polytheism, especially in the form of the

worship of evil spirits"—a position, again, quite one-sided and contestable, and hence his view of Zoroastrian "trinitarianism" as rising out of monotheism loses its foundation. The entire exposition of the "mediator" doctrine as an element in the "ethnic trinity" is vitiated by a confusion as to the office performed by the mediator—whether mediating between gods or between man and God. In one case the trinity is God, mediator, man; and the argument proves nothing. Yet the examples of both sorts are used interchangeably to prove the point. There is almost complete ignoring, also—we may except the statements on pp. 21 and 33 which are quite contrary to the facts—of the ascertained results of historical investigation that the "ethnic trinities" are chiefly, if not altogether, late in the history of their several religions and the work of priestly circles. This fact makes havoc of no little of the groundwork laid by Professor Paine in the first part of his volume.

On the other hand, a large amount of valuable material is presented. The attempt made to organize it is praiseworthy. Somebody must blaze pathways through these thickets. Mistakes will be made in the process. Later workers will rectify the wrong turns, widen the paths, make better connections. The best work Professor Paine has done is in the field of later Greek speculation, where the relation to concrete historical movements of religious life is least traceable. The truth is that, with all his interest in historical science, his writings present him as a daring speculator, a fertile and fearless generalizer on historical bases not always solidly laid. A striking instance of this is given in the quite characteristic statement on p. 361: "The *Zeitgeist* has worked too hard to get rid of the metaphysical cobwebs of past millenniums, and to set its house in order for the new facts of science and history, to listen credulously or patiently to any metaphysical siren song."

The second part of the discussion, barring the weakness lying in the defects of the former part, is much more satisfactory. The thesis laid down for proof is a rather sweeping one, viz.: "The Christian trinity . . . is not only historically connected with the ethnic trinities, but has also an intimate logical and internal relationship." To our mind the author has shown points of resemblance, historical analogies, some connecting links—nothing more. The discussion is suggestive, but not convincing.

On the basis of the two lines of discussion the author has proceeded in his last chapters to discuss more general topics which are a

kind of expression of opinion as to much larger questions, like the essential character of Christianity, its present condition, its perils, and the problems of the future in theology. While it is not clear why such discussions are altogether relevant to the subject which gives the title to the book, one cannot help admiring the courage and hopefulness of the author in the face of what he must needs regard as the dark aspects of the present, which in their turn seem to rise out of the essence of the faith as hitherto believed and lived. Much that is beloved must go before the new dawn can arise, which will consist, however, after all, in "a revival of Christ's own religion, simple, spiritual, filled with a sense of God's presence and reflecting his gracious spirit of love."

It is most unfortunate that a book covering so wide a range of religious history and dealing so largely in details contains almost no references to pertinent literature. The author could have doubled the value of his work in this way. Surely historical writers ought to be most conscientious on this score. In the case of a recognized scholar like Professor Paine no one would have dreamed of suspecting him of attempting to make a show with lists of authorities. His modesty—if we may ascribe the defect to this cause—has done him grievous wrong, and of it his readers may justly complain.

G. S. G.

Musical Ministries in the Church. Studies in the History, Theory, and Administration of Sacred Music. By PROFESSOR WALDO S. PRATT, MUS.D., Hartford Theological Seminary. Chicago: F. H. Revell Co., 1901. Pp. 181. \$1, *net*.

Church music, whether vocal or instrumental, choral or congregational, has but one legitimate function, namely, to promote the spiritual life of the worshipers. When the religious character and aim are obscured, music is harmful rather than helpful to the church service. Theoretically this is recognized by all, and there can be no question that a rapid and steady improvement in this feature of public worship has been in progress for a generation. The difficulty, however, is great of getting organists, soloists, and choir leaders who appreciate the difference between sacred and secular music, and who keep in mind the true purpose which music in worship is to serve. It is necessary that someone hold up constantly the ideal of religious music in every church; and inasmuch as it is the minister who is primarily responsible for the public services of the church, and the realization of their true